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SIPDIS

NOFORN

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: PRO-DEMOCRACY ETHNIC PARTIES SEEK USG ASSISTANCE

Classified By: CDA, a.i. Ronald McMullen for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

1. (S/NF) Hkun Htun Oo, acting in his capacity as head of the ten-party United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), formally requested USG financial assistance for UNA member parties for "democracy and humanitarian affairs" in a meeting with emboffs November 9th.

2. (SBU) Hkun Htun Oo, besides heading the UNA, is chairman of Burma's second largest political party, the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD). The UNA's other nine members represent Chin, Mon, Kachin, Kayah, Arakanese, and other pro-democracy ethnic parties.

3. (S/NF) The National League for Democracy, by far the largest of Burma's pro-democracy parties, has made clear it would not accept direct foreign support, although NLD General Secretary Aung San Suu Kyi, we understand, is currently

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pondering several potential indirect mechanisms and will be in touch with us by the end of November on this.

4. (S/NF) COMMENT: The timing of the UNA request for direct USG support is not arbitrary. The purging of General Khin Nyunt and the dismantling of his Military Intelligence apparatus represents both a risk to and an opportunity for the beleaguered pro-democracy ethnic political parties. The risk involves the potential for a regime crackdown on non-Burman ethnic groups in general, including pro-democracy political parties and (sometimes allied) former insurgent groups that have negotiated cease-fires with General Khin Nyunt. The opportunity arises from the perhaps temporary absence of an omnipotent state organ for domestic repression. Bluntly put, they might be thinking, "Khin Nyunt's informants are gone, but Maung Aye's troops might be more stringent in the future; now's the time to put in place some support mechanism for our long-suffering party and its members." We note that support to pro-democracy groups would not have the regime's sanction. END COMMENT.

MCMULLEN